Chinese Ethics in Communication, Collaboration, and Digitalization in the Digital Age

Ying-chun Hsieh, professor

Department of Journalism

National Chengchi University

Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Ching-chun Hsieh, research fellow

Institute of Information Science

Academia Sinica

Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

1

Outline-1

- Introduction
- The Definition of Ethics in Chinese
- The Concept of Chinese Ethics
- The Practice of Chinese Ethics
- Information Ethics
- Cyber World with Chinese Ethics
- Communication, Collaboration, and Digitalization

Outline-2

- Ethical Issues in Collaboration, and Digitalization
- Typical Examples of Information Ethics in the Digital Age
    - *Example One (within the same culture)*
    - *Example Two (within the same culture)*
    - *Example Three (with multi-culture settings)*
- Conclusion

Introduction-1

- National Digital Archives Program (NDAP)

- National Digital Museum Project

- A study of "Communication, Collaboration, and Digitalization"

Introduction-2

- The major difference of ethics in western society and Chinese society is the definition of 'ethics.'

- Chinese people define 'ethics' as the relationship of people which is according to the distance of people's relations.

- The term of ethics focuses on the relationship of 'people' instead of 'work' (or matter).

The Definition of Ethics in Chinese

- The term of 'ethics' in Chinese has two highly related but not exactly equivalent definitions
  - moral codes
  - 'lun li': normal relationships among people, comparison, classification, and order
- Ethics is always translated as 'lun li' in Chinese with the context of 'moral codes.'

The Concept of Chinese Ethics-1

- Developed and elaborated by Confucius
- Confucius cared much about '*jen*'
  - benevolence, humanity, mercy, charity, magnanimity, and kindness
  - to be philanthropic, love, love and justice, and benevolence and generous
- In the context of Chinese ethics, *Five Superiors* and *Five Ethics* are the basic concepts, also as the guidance for people to live in society.

The Concept of Chinese Ethics-2

- ***Five Superiors***
  - the heaven, the earth, the king, the parents, and the mentor/teacher
- ***Five Ethics***
  - between sovereign and subjects
  - between parents and children
  - between husband and wife
  - among brothers and sisters
  - among friends

The Concept of Chinese Ethics-3

- The relationship between people and people is the core of ethics.

- The relationship starts from the very beginning, an individual, who always obeys the social rules, requirements inherited from ancestors.

The Practice of Chinese Ethics-1

- Confucius: *to educate oneself well, to take good care of families, to manage the people in harmony, and then to conquer the world.*

- Chinese ethics starts from the '*self*,' with the *individual's morality first*, then goes to the relationship with others.

- You can help people unless you can help yourself first, and you will be able to get to people only after you get to yourself.

The Practice of Chinese Ethics-2

- Three aspects
  - 'relational or affection,' 'rational,' and 'legal'
- Priority of ***Five Ethics*:**
  - Great loyalty, great '*hsiao'*
- Classical example: father's crime
- The ***Five Ethics*** in Chinese culture is the 'gradient relationships.' *(Fe, 1948, p.22)*

Information Ethics-1

- Privacy:
  - free speech, free expressing in public sphere and the anonymity
- Accuracy (information integrity)
  - accuracy, precision, timing and appropriation (in form and quantity)

Information Ethics-2

- Property
  - Intellectual property right, ownership, control and information sharing
- Access
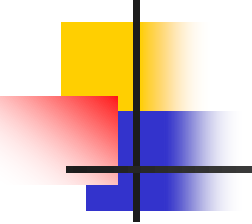 - Fair use, equal distribution, equal access to everyone

Cyber World with Chinese Ethics-1

- '***Virtual***' means "with the same function, the same utility," came from the same root of words as '***virtue***.'

- '***Virtual reality***' has the meaning of "the object or objects, or settings have the same function and utility as the real one has."

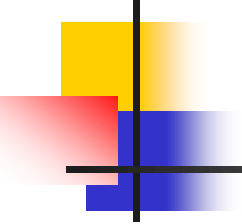- In cyber world, a real person can become 'virtual' and vice versa.

Cyber World with Chinese Ethics-2

- ***Free thought*** is allowed in all kinds of communication, but ***actions*** and ***behaviors*** need to <u>pay the price with its' consequences</u>.

- To communicate with a ***real person*** will be different from the way to communicate with a ***virtual character***.

- Chinese ethics emphasizes on the ***social justice***, ***fairness*** to everyone, with the ***harmony*** of human relationships in the society.
    - Cyber crime, as an example

Communication, collaboration, and digitalization-1

- The greatest enterprise of the mind has always been and always will be the attempt linkage of the **science** and **humanities**.*(Wilson, 1998, p.8)*

- Innovation theory *(Rogers, 1971)*

- Science communication theory *(Snow, 1980)*

- Three cases
  - **University of California at Berkeley,**
  - **Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University**
  - **Digital Museum Project of Academia Sinica (1998-1999).**

16

Communication, collaboration, and digitalization-2

- Communication and collaboration happen in all settings
  - interdisciplinary
  - Multidisciplinary
- ***Consilience but remaining diversity*** will be a shared common ground while reconstructing humanities in the rapid developing technological society…. We must live together ***in peace***, with ***collaboration*** to fulfill the work of reconstruction of humanities in using technology. *(Fe, 2001)*

Ethical Issues in Collaboration, and Digitalization

- Intellectual property right
- Copyright
- loyalties
- money matters
- courtesy

Typical Examples of Information Ethics in the Digital Age

- ## Example One (within the same culture)

  - pp.14-15

- ## Example Two (within the same culture)

  - pp.16-18

- ## Example Three (with multi-culture settings)

  - pp.18-19

Conclusion-1

- new world, with new knowledge, new experience and new behavioral pattern

- new culture, new ethical practice

- Mason's assertion of information ethics:
  - Privacy, Accuracy, Property, Access

Conclusion-2

- International collaboration
  - content holders
  - Internet developers
  - distributors
- Chinese ethics
  - consilience of the real world
  - fairness and justice in a society

  Are the supreme concerns in human society

  An answer to ethical problems in virtual world

The End

Thank you!

Please contact

Professor Y.C. Hsieh at: *ychsieh@nccu.edu.tw*

Dr. C.C. Hsieh at: *hsieh@sinica.edu.tw*

NDAP website: *http://www.ndao.sinica.edu.tw*